

REMARKS

1. Applicant affirms the election to prosecute the invention of species I, claims 1-4. All of the claims now pending in the application, including new claims 21-36, are drawn to the elected species. No new matter has been added; all of the claimed features are clearly shown and/or described in the specification and/or drawings of the application as filed.

2. Claims 1-4 were rejected as being indefinite under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

3. The claims have been amended to make them definite as required under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. More specifically, in claim 1 the limitation "the miniaturized video camera" has been changed to "the optical imaging system", which does have antecedent basis within the claim.

4. Claims 1-3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Oz (US 5,079,629).

5. Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Oz.

6. Claims 1-4 and 21-36 distinguish over Oz by the novel and unobvious feature of having the optical imaging system laterally offset from the user's hand or fingers, thereby leaving all of the fingertips of the user's hand free and unencumbered for performing a medical examination or medical procedure. This allows the user to augment a digital pelvic examination or other obstetrical procedure requiring free and unencumbered use of the user's fingertips with videoendoscopic visualization without negatively impacting the procedure performed.

By contrast, Oz has an optical imaging system mounted directly on the operator's fingertip. This would allow endoscopic visualization, but it would significantly interfere with any procedure requiring free and unencumbered use of the user's fingertips.

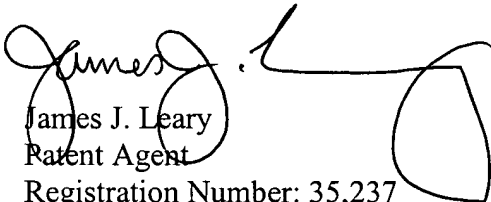
In addition, claims 1-4, 21-21, 27 and 32 distinguish over Oz by the novel and unobvious feature of the optical imaging system having the proximal and distal ends smoothly tapered toward the surface of the user's hand or finger for ease of insertion and removal of the optical imaging system in a body cavity of a patient alongside the user's hand or finger. This feature is much more important when the optical imaging system is laterally offset from the user's hand or finger so that the optical imaging system can be easily inserted and removed without catching on the entrance or other structure in the body cavity. Such considerations are not as important with the configuration of the optical imaging system in Oz, which is mounted directly on the operator's fingertip and is matched to the size of the fingertip rather than being smoothly tapered toward the surface of the finger.

Claims 1-4 and 21-36 are therefore submitted to be patentable over Oz under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

CONCLUSION

Applicant submits that the claims all define novel subject matter that is unobvious. Therefore, allowance of such claims is submitted to be proper and is respectfully requested. If Examiner deems that additional changes are needed prior to allowance of the claims, Examiner is urged to initiate a telephonic interview with applicant's representative at the telephone number listed below.

Very respectfully submitted,


James J. Leary
Patent Agent
Registration Number: 35,237
Telephone: (916) 791-3441